



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
From 'Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest'

PRIMULA INCANA **MEALY PRIMROSE**

Mealy Primrose is a perennial with leafless stems 10-45 cm tall, arising from a basal rosette of leaves and fibrous roots. Leaves usually have a mealy, whitish covering, are elliptic or oblanceolate with slightly toothed margins, 0.3-1.6 cm wide, and up to 6 cm long including the winged petioles. Inflorescences are capitate, 7-19 flowered, surmounting involucre bracts that are 0.5-1 cm long, oblong, with a whitish, mealy covering, and pouched at the base. The calyx also has a whitish, mealy covering, is cylindrical, 0.4-0.7 cm long, and divided up to 1/3 its length by lanceolate teeth that have a glandular surface. The corolla is lavender with a yellow throat, forming a tube that is equal or slightly longer than the calyx, ca. 0.4 - 0.8 cm long and wide. Stamens are ca. 1 mm long and of equal length. The capsule is cylindrical to slightly elliptical, and equaling or slightly exceeding the length of the calyx. Flowering in June.

PRIMULA INCANA differs from *P. PARRYI* in that the corolla is less than 1 cm wide, the leaves lie low to the ground, and it is not found at alpine or subalpine habitats. It most closely resembles *P. ALCALINA*, from which it differs in having a lilac rather than white corolla, and generally longer calyx and corolla. However, the two species sometimes overlap in these characteristics, as in the case of albinos. The whitish, mealy covering on both surfaces of mature leaves is a good indicator but the presence of 4 equal-length styles is the only reliable field character. A hand lens or microscope are needed for positive identification.